

AMENDMENTS

In the Claims

The following is a marked-up version of the claims with the language that is underlined (“ ”) being added and the language that contains strikethrough (“~~—~~”) being deleted:

1. (Currently Amended) A communication method comprising:
receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a sender to a first recipient;
waiting a predefined time interval for an input from the first recipient, the input being responsive to the IM message; determining whether input from the first recipient is received during the predetermined time interval; and
in response to determining that no input from the first recipient is received during the predetermined time interval, ~~automatically replying to the IM message in the absence of an input from the recipient during the predefined time interval.~~ prompting the sender to send the instant message to a second recipient and indicating, by the first recipient, that the IM message originated from the sender.
2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein replying to the IM message comprises:
providing a message indicating the recipient's unavailability to engage in an IM chat session.
3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein replying to the IM message comprises:
providing a message requesting the sender to wait for a predetermined time period.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein replying to the IM message comprises:

periodically providing messages, the messages being periodically provided at predefined time intervals, each message indicating the recipient's unavailability to engage in an IM chat session during the corresponding predefined time interval.

5. (Currently Amended) A communication method comprising:
receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a first sender to a recipient;
determining whether input from the recipient is received during a predetermined time interval;

in response to determining that no input is received during the predetermined time interval determining whether the recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with a second sender; and

in response to determining that the recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with the second sender, ~~automatically replying to the IM message in response to determining that the recipient is engaged in the IM chat session with the second sender.~~ prompting the sender to send the instant message to a second recipient and indicating, by the first recipient, that the IM message originated from the sender.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, further comprising: waiting a predefined time interval prior to replying to the IM message.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, further comprising:
indicating to the first sender that the recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with the second sender.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, further comprising: periodically providing messages to the first sender, the messages being periodically provided at predefined time intervals, each message indicating the recipient's unavailability to engage in an IM chat session during the corresponding predefined time interval.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, further comprising:
indicating to the first sender that the recipient is unavailable to engage in an IM chat session with the first sender.

10. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium comprising:
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a sender to a recipient;
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to wait a predefined time interval for an input from the recipient, the input being responsive to the IM message;
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine whether input from the recipient is received during the predetermined time interval; and
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to, in response to determining that no input from the recipient is received during the predetermined time interval, reply to the IM message in the absence of an input from the recipient during the predefined time interval, prompt the sender to send the instant message to a second recipient and indicating, by the first recipient, that the IM message originated from the sender.

11. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 10, further comprising:
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to provide a message indicating the recipient's unavailability to engage in an IM chat session.

12. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 10, further comprising:
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to provide a message requesting the sender to wait for a predetermined time period.

13. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 10, further comprising:
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to periodically provide messages, the messages being periodically provided at predefined time intervals, each message indicating the recipient's unavailability to engage in an IM chat session during the corresponding predefined time interval.

14. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium comprising:
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to receive an instant messaging (IM) message from a first sender to a recipient;
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine whether input from the recipient is received during a predetermined time interval;
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to, in response to determining that no input is received during the predetermined time interval, determine whether the recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with second sender; and
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to, in response to determining that the recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with the second sender, ~~reply to the IM message in response to determining that the recipient is engaged in the IM chat session~~

~~with the second sender.~~ prompt the sender to send the instant message to a second recipient and indicating, by the first recipient, that the IM message originated from the sender.

15. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 14, further comprising:
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to wait a predefined time interval prior to replying to the IM message.

16. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 14, further comprising:
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate that the recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with the second sender.

17. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 14, further comprising:
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to periodically provide messages to the first sender, the messages being periodically provided at predefined time intervals, each message indicating the recipient's unavailability to engage in an IM chat session during the corresponding predefined time interval.

18. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 14, further comprising:
computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to indicate that the recipient is unavailable to engage in an IM chat session with the first sender.

19. (Currently Amended) A communication system comprising:
means for receiving an instant messaging (IM) message from a sender to a recipient;
means for determining whether the recipient has provided an input during a predefined time interval;

means for, in response to determining that the recipient has not provided an input during the predetermined time interval, determining whether the recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with another sender; ~~and~~

means for, in response to determining that the recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with another sender, replying to the IM ~~message~~; message; and

means for, in response to determining that the recipient is not engaged in an IM chat session with another user, prompting the sender to send the instant message to a second recipient and indicating, by the first recipient, that the IM message originated from the sender.

20. (Currently Amended) A communication system comprising:

instant-messaging (IM) receive logic configured to receive an IM message from a sender to a recipient;

first determining logic configured to determine whether the recipient has provided an input during a predefined time interval;

second determining logic configured to, in response to determining that the recipient has not provided an input during the predetermined time interval, determine whether the recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with another sender;

reply logic configured to, in response to determining that the recipient is engaged in an IM chat session with another sender, reply to the IM ~~message~~; message; and

prompting logic configured to, in response to determining that the recipient is not engaged in an IM chat session with another sender, prompt the sender to send the instant message to a second recipient and indicating, by the first recipient, that the IM message originated from the sender.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the determining logic comprises:

a timer configured to track elapsed time from a receiving of an IM message.

22. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the reply logic comprises:
message-generation logic configured to generate a message, the message being
indicative of the recipient's unavailability to engage in an IM chat session.